

## **"Testament" ("Заповіт")"**

*An interpretation of a Taras Shevchenko poem by :Darcy-John:Bouchard*

When I am dead, O my grave dug  
On this land of grass and berries,  
Remember; lay my bones low in silent tomb  
Bury me underneath a mound, and let me slumber  
Out where my beloved Prairie stretches free, unbounded.  
And raise an ancient stone by *li rivière kisiskâciwan*  
'Mid the rolling plains ...  
With precious-sweet "SOUTH BRANCH" earth around – my own cherished homeland:  
Beloved;  
So that I might gaze on fields, parkland without bounds – there  
'Midst hilly-meadows' grassy sward,  
Whence one may see wide-skirted wheat-lands spreading before them  
- Splendid 'scapes I'd love once more to see  
That the mighty girth of acres - fair land and wide - I will lie  
And watch *li rivière kisiskâciwan*'s plunging banks ...  
That my eyes may gaze on, and my ears may hearken to  
How quiet the swift water flows;  
Listen through the years  
To the whispering water's silent roar echoing in my ears,  
As it carries... rolling to the shallows of Lake Winnipeg's murky waters;  
So far from Batoché et *li Coulée-des-Tourond*;  
I hear the swift-water call, as blood, a racing flood that flows  
Far from *li rivière Petit Castor*,  
And it bears in fierce endeavour the hated-blood of foes ... no longer there.  
Then, at last, shall I forsake where my ashes are ... but washed away;  
I will leave them all, and depart these hills and fertile fields for ever;  
I will leave the life I have led; when the plains are swept by blood!  
Leave all behind and fly away. – Soar up unto the Throne of God ...  
There before *kisê-manitow* in eternal heaven on high, I'll plead my Communion Prayer.  
But till that Day of Liberty happens, that hour, that moment ...  
I shall know naught of the Divine Care of God – What is reverence of God to me *now*?  
O grant me a burial! – Then, standing boldly together around my grave...  
Sunder your heavy chains and shatter every link,  
Make ye haste, your fetters to tear in twain ... lest no one of you be slave.  
Rise ye up to be done with me ... and set you free,  
Drenched with the unholy tyrant's foul blood – for rain – as the Baptismal Water of your  
New Liberty:  
Bless your fair freedom, which you have gained, with the sprinkled Blood of Kinship  
That my name and what is remembered of me thrives in your great kindred:  
Thence shalt spring up a family new and free. – Cherish it, lest it perish.  
Quietly remember, also. – Don't forget! Sometime  
In your glorious State of Being, do not fail to make a mention of our STOLEN LIFE...  
And gently speak, fair and true of me, with soft, kind words of good intent.